FILIPINO CHARACTERISTICS [5]

To a youthful Spanish priest was assigned the task—so the story goes—of preparing a tome dealing with the Filipinos, and he was given big books in blank on which to write his findings. Years went by and the priest died. The books were found and cautiously and reverently the covers of the *magnus of us* were opened. Lo and behold the pages were blank except on the first page of the first volume where was written a single line: "Here is all that I have found about the Filipinos."

Kipling, who knew his India, wrote, "For the East is East and the West is West; And never the twain shall meet."

The anecdote and the couplet have been taken literally by many Americans. The Oriental, and the Filipino is considered as such, although in reality he is not, has been set apart as a being entirely distinct from the Occidental Remarkable and conflicting opinions on the merits and demerits of the Filipinos have been aired. Some there are who have lamented that they could comprehend nothing of the Filipino mind. Others have attempted an analysis of the character of the Filipino and found it most mysterious. New arrivals have called the Filipino "boy" and have talked to him in pigeon English and bamboo Spanish. That the Filipino has not laughed when looked down upon as an inferior being or held up before the microscope as a wondrous enigma, has been due to his innate sense of courtesy.

Certain authors have purported "to tell the truth about the Philippines" and the Filipinos, but in such a grotesque man-

ner as not to be recognizable as truth by those of us who have lived for years among the kindly people who inhabit the Islands. On the other hand, superficial and exuberant Filipinos and foreigners have gone to the other extreme, to describe the Filipinos as model citizens possessed of all the virtues. As a matter of strict fact, the Filipinos are neither the

[5] **See Justice Norberto Romualdez, *The Psychology of the Filipino* (19*5).**